



2025

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



MA & PA
Heritage Trail
Maryland



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The MA & PA Heritage Trail is not your typical rail-trail. Named for the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad, which chugged through the Harford County countryside for the first half of the 20th century, the trail has some tight turns and short, steep climbs that are uncharacteristic of a railroad grade.

The trail is currently in two sections separated by a 2-mile gap, but efforts by county and city officials, as well as trail foundation members are expected to close the gap between Bel Air and Forest Hill by late 2023 or early 2024. You'll be able to take a 7-mile trail from Annie's Playground in Bel Air's Edgeley Grove Park to Friends Community Park in Forest Hill. Along the way, you can read about historical and environmental features on trailside signs or speak with volunteer trail monitors who

clear trash and debris.

The railroad originated in the late 1800s, and in the early 1900s a merger created the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad, which ran between Baltimore and York, Pennsylvania. Passenger service ended in the 1950s, and freight service through Bel Air and Forest Hill ended soon thereafter. A community effort to create a trail started 40 years later.

While the trail generally follows the corridor of the MA & PA, long sections don't use the old railbed because of the development that took place in the intervening years. These sections rely instead on available rights-of-way through parks and easements, leading to sharp turns and rougher terrain.

Bel Air's 3.4 miles of trail rise and fall with the landscape as the route passes through Annie's Playground, Edgeley Grove Park, and Heavenly Waters Park west of US 1. You'll find bridges, overlooks, an old stand of trees, and a boardwalk in this area. Horseback riding is allowed on the trail in the vicinity of the Harford County Equestrian Center.

To explore off-trail, take the spur leading to Harford Mall just before the lighted tunnel under Veterans Memorial Highway. Another spur leads to the restored Liriodendron Mansion and art gallery (see liriodendron.com for free-admission schedule). If you're looking for refreshment, you can choose from many eateries or a brewery in the vicinity of North Main Street.

When the new segments open, the trail will follow the old railroad grade next to Bel Air Memorial Gardens before arriving at a woody area alongside Bynum Creek. North of the Bel Air Bypass/US 1, the trail will connect to an established 1.7-mile segment at Blakes Venture Park in Forest Hill that follows the railbed to the pond at Friends Community Park, located just off East Jarrettsville Road on Friends Park Road.



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States: Maryland

Counties: Harford

Length: 5.1miles

Trail end points: Edgeley Grove at Smith Ln
(near US 1) (Bel Air) to Melrose Ln (Forest Hill)

Trail surfaces: Boardwalk, Crushed Stone, Dirt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Horseback

Riding, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

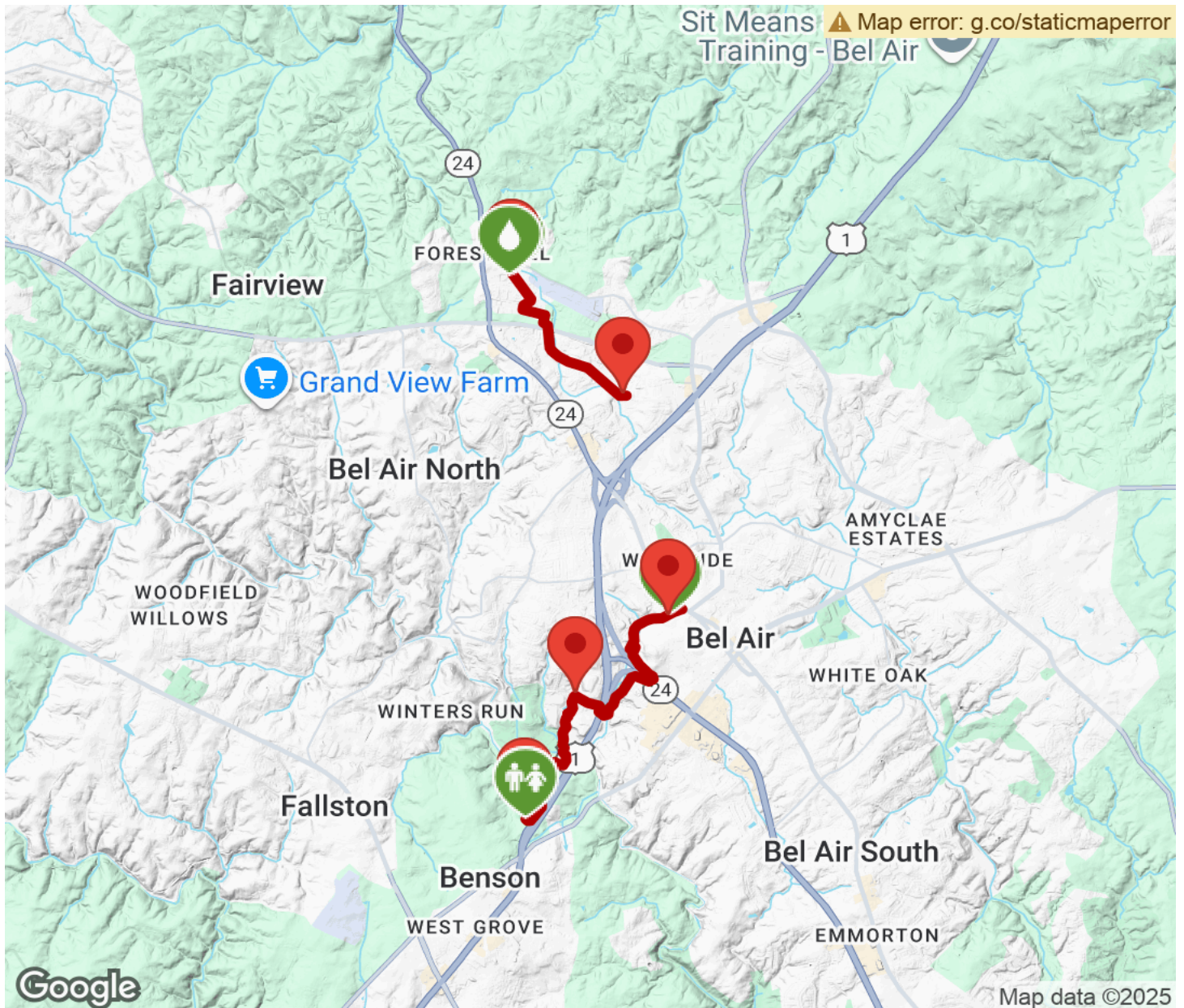
To reach the northern endpoint of the Bel Air section from Interstate 95, take State Route 24 (Exit 77B) north toward Bel Air. Turn right on Baltimore Pike/US 1 Business, then turn left on Archer Street. Turn right on Thomas Street and make an immediate left on Williams Street. Go 0.5 mile to the trail parking lot on the left (Williams St & W Ellendale S). There is also parking at the southern endpoint at Edgeley Grove and Annie's Playground (864 Smith Ln, Fallston, Maryland) and on County Home Rd & N Tollgate Rd.

To access the northern endpoint of the Forest Hill segment, take SR 24 north from Bel Air through SR 23/East West Highway. Continue on Rock Spring Road/SR 24. Follow this for about 0.5 mile and turn right onto E. Jarrettsville Road; look for Friends Park on the right and turn right into the park. Follow the drive past the pond and up the rise to the trailhead. To reach the Melrose Lane endpoint, take Rock Spring Road/SR 24 to Bynum Road and turn northeast. Where Bynum curves east, turn left on Melrose Lane then left again into the parking area just a few hundreds yards farther (Blakes Venture Trailhead, Melrose Ln). There is also parking at the Friends Community Park (37 E. Jarrettsville Rd, between Rocks Rd/MD 24 & Maxa Meadows Ln).



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel